



# your health & well-being

## Quitting Smoking? You Don't Have to Gain Weight

Many people worry about gaining weight when they quit smoking. Most people do gain weight, but it's usually less than 10 pounds.<sup>1</sup> Most of the gain happens in the first six months after you quit. The good news is that there are steps you can take to minimize your weight gain.

**The important thing is to quit smoking. The minute you quit, you'll be starting a much healthier life. Remember:**

- Smoking is much worse for your health than gaining a few pounds.
- If you try to lose weight at the same time that you try to quit smoking, you will probably have a harder time quitting. So deal with quitting first, and worry about weight gain when or if it happens.
- While you are trying to quit, focus on eating healthy foods and being more active.

### What is the connection between quitting smoking and gaining weight?

**The main reason that people gain weight when they quit smoking is simple: They eat more. Why?**

- Nicotine curbs your appetite and perks you up when your energy is low. When you quit smoking, you may feel hungry more often and eat more as a result.
- Nicotine dulls your taste buds. When you quit smoking, food tastes better and you may want to eat more.
- Without cigarettes, you may turn to food as a replacement, to keep your hands and mouth busy at times when you used to smoke.
- Nicotine makes your body burn calories faster, so when you quit, your body isn't burning calories as fast as it used to.

### Why quit smoking if it's going to make you gain weight?

**It's not inevitable. If you do gain a little weight, it's still better than smoking:**

- A few extra pounds can be lost later. Serious damage to your lungs if you keep smoking can't be fixed later.
- Most people would have to gain 100 pounds or more to put their health in danger the way smoking does.
- As soon as you quit smoking, you lower your chances of having a heart attack or a stroke.
- After 10 years of not smoking, your chances of getting lung cancer are much lower.
- By quitting, you lower your risk of getting cancers of the voice box, mouth, throat, esophagus, intestine, bladder, kidney, and pancreas.

- When you quit, you get rid of the secondhand smoke that may be putting the health of your family in danger.
- When you quit, you stop smelling like a smoker. You'll have fresher-smelling clothes and fresh breath.
- You'll save money!

### Avoiding weight gain

**Think positive, and keep temptation away:**

- Don't quit smoking during holiday periods. You're more likely to eat more then.
- Stay away from alcohol. Alcoholic drinks have a lot of calories, so avoiding them will help you control your weight. Drinking can weaken your willpower, especially if you usually smoke when you drink.
- Consider getting professional help. Nutritionists, fitness instructors, and therapists can all help you control your weight when you quit smoking.
- Make regular activity part of your life. Try walking or exercising with a partner or group.
- Weigh yourself at least once a week so those extra pounds won't "sneak up" on you.

**A big reason people gain weight is that they reach for food instead of a cigarette after they quit.**

- When you have a craving for a cigarette or food, remember that cravings usually last only a few minutes. Do something else instead.
- Instead of eating candy or other food to replace the cigarettes, chew on a toothpick, or coffee stirrer.
- If you need something sweet, eat fruit, sugar-free gum, or candy.
- Keep your hands busy so you don't use them to eat. For example, take up knitting, crossword puzzles or sudoku.
- People often turn to food at times of tension or stress. Find other ways to deal with those times. Go for a walk, call a friend, or play with the kids.

Sources: Healthwise®



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## november tip of the month

### How can you stop using tobacco?

You don't have to quit alone. Ask your family, friends, and doctor to help you. Quitting is hard, but if you have help and a plan, it is much easier.

- Get ready. You don't have to stop right away, but set a date to quit. Pick a time when you won't have a lot of stress in your life. Get rid of ashtrays and lighters before you quit. Don't let people smoke in your house.
- Change your routine. For example, if you smoke after eating, take a walk instead.
- Use medication. It can help with cravings and stress. You can buy nicotine gum, lozenges, or patches without a prescription.
- Get support. Seek help from:
  - CIGNA Quit Today®
  - Stop-smoking programs, such as the American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking program.
  - National tobacco quit line: 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669).
  - Counseling from doctors, nurses, or therapists.

As soon as you stop, stay committed. Don't use tobacco at all. One cigarette never helps. It only makes it harder.

## On myCIGNA.com this month

### Make THIS the year you commit to quit

November 19 is the Great American Smokeout, sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Make it a day to take quitting seriously, whether the habit is smoking or chewing tobacco. You'll find information and resources at the American Cancer Society website.

Remember that the Healthy Rewards discount program\* offers savings on nicotine replacement therapies and programs to support you as you quit. Just go to [www.myCIGNA.com](http://www.myCIGNA.com), and click on the myHealth tab. Look for the Member Discount section for complete details.

*\* Not all Healthy Rewards programs are available in all states.*





# Important Contact Information

Two simple resources provide access to tools and information so that you and your family can take care of your health and wellness needs. You can go online, or call the number on your ID card.

## Online

[www.myCIGNA.com](http://www.myCIGNA.com)

Register, then log in for direct, secure access to your personal health information and plan benefits.

*You can:*

- Find a doctor or a Convenience Care center
- Track claims and account balances
- Get cost and quality information for hospitals, specialists and prescription medications
- Find health and wellness information from trusted resources.
- Compare costs for your covered prescription medications. Go to the Pharmacy tab to check prices at your area pharmacies.
- Check the Nurse Line audio library if you want to learn about a health topic or medical condition. Just go to myHealth, then click Health Information Line to view the complete catalog, or to download podcasts (mp3) on selected topics. (Download details are provided on the myCIGNA page.)

## my health assessment

Complete this online questionnaire to get a clear picture of your overall health, and identify ways to protect or improve it. Go to myCIGNA, myHealth page.

Need help with stress? Trouble sleeping? Want to eat better, or be more active? **CIGNA Online Coaching Programs** will help you achieve your goals. Go to myCIGNA, myHealth page to start.

## We're only a phone call away.

**Need to speak to a health advisor, or check on the status of a claim? Call your Customer Service team for help.**

**Active employees: 800.633.8519 • Retirees: 800.942.6724**

- Contact a **Health Advisor** if you or a family member has a specific health issue or condition. They can help you with chronic health conditions like diabetes, asthma, metabolic syndrome, low back pain, heart disease, and more. They can also guide you to programs to lose weight or quit smoking.
- **24-Hour Nurse Line**  
Call any time to speak with a registered nurse for expert, reliable help and guidance. You can also listen to a health recording from the audio library. To access a recording first look up the topic and code number on myCIGNA.com, then call and follow the phone prompts to enter the 4-digit code and listen to the recording.
- **Healthy Babies**  
Support for moms and babies from the start of pregnancy through delivery. Just call to enroll.
- Sometimes life can be hard to handle. If you are dealing with **mental health or substance abuse** issues, you and your dependents have access to the assistance you need, round the clock.

## Address updates

**You could be missing out on important mailings.**

**For active employees**, please complete and submit a Change and Miscellaneous Update form (available online).

- Go to [dch.georgia.gov/shbp](http://dch.georgia.gov/shbp). Click **SHBP forms** then **Eligibility forms**.
- Scroll to **Enroll or Update Coverage** and click **Change and Miscellaneous Update Form** to open the form.

Print out and complete the form, and return it to your payroll location benefit manager.

**For retired employees**, please submit the following information:

- Name
- Subscriber number from your CIGNA ID card or Social Security number
- Current address
- New address
- Telephone number
- Signature authorizing the address change

## Retirees mail to:

State Health Benefit Plan  
P.O. Box 1990  
Atlanta, GA 30301-1990



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